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RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHFJSCC/COMMARFORPAC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 006031

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TH](#)  
SUBJECT: THAILAND UPDATE: OCTOBER 2

REF: A. BANGKOK 6003

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 5973  
[1](#)C. BANGKOK 4416

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton, reason 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The interim Prime Minister and interim Constitution were announced on Sunday; the interim Constitution appears to have the same weaknesses as the draft version reported last week (ref A). The Cabinet should be announced within about a week. Four of Thaksin's close advisors, who had been detained by the Council on Democratic Reform (CDR), were released on Sunday. The CDR announced a revamped, higher-profile assets investigation team, and a tougher party dissolution law, provoking a wave of resignations from Thai Rak Thai. A cab driver rammed a tank in downtown Bangkok to show his opposition to the coup. END SUMMARY

#### NEW PM AND INTERIM CONSTITUTION

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[1](#)2. (C) Surayud Chulanont was named interim Prime Minister in a ceremony on Sunday (ref B). He plans to name his new cabinet within about a week. The interim Constitution was also promulgated. Our initial review of the promulgated Constitution indicates no substantive changes over the draft that we reviewed (ref A). See septel for account of Ambassador's meeting with Surayud and discussion of the interim Constitution.

#### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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[1](#)3. (U) Four Thai Rak Thai (TRT) officials close to Thaksin who had been 'invited under the care of the Council for Democratic Reform (CDR)' were released on Sunday: Deputy PM Chidchai, Natural Resources Minister Yongyuth, TRT Secretary General Prommin and Minister in the PM's office Newin (all former). The government says police will monitor their activities.

#### ASSETS INVESTIGATION TEAM UPGRADED

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[1](#)4. (C) Many commentators have pointed out that, as the CDR has given corruption as one of the chief reasons for its

intervention, it had better make credible progress quickly on anti-corruption investigations. After the coup, the CDR quickly affirmed that the popular Auditor-General Khunying Jaruvan would keep her job. The CDR also moved to re-establish the National Counter-Corruption Commission (NCCC), which had not functioned for almost two years. It further established a special graft investigation panel which included the Auditor-General. The graft investigation panel has now been re-invented, apparently after a conflict between the AG (a woman with a mission to root out corruption) and more cautious members of the panel. The revamped commission has some high-profile graft opponents, and includes several judges who were nominated to be on the Election Commission but did not make the cut. Several of the members have a track-record of criticizing Thaksin over corruption issues.

#### ANTI-COUP CAB DRIVER

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15. (C) A cab driver on Saturday rammed one of the tanks at the Royal Plaza, Press reports say that the driver was hospitalized with cracked ribs (while the tank was unharmed.) Bangkok cab drivers, many of whom are from the impoverished Northeast, made up one of the most solidly pro-Thaksin groups in the capital. This is the first report we've seen, however, of cab drivers carrying out acts like this to protest the coup.

#### PARTY DISSOLUTION LAW WITH TEETH

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16. (C) Back in the pre-coup days, the Election Commission investigated TRT's collusion with smaller parties to

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circumvent certain aspects of the election law, and recommended that TRT be dissolved. As the case went to the Constitutional Court for consideration, many of our interlocutors were surprised to find out that the constitutional provisions for punishing a dissolved party were almost meaningless (ref C). All party members, including the leadership, were able to run for parliament or hold public office, just under the banner of a different party. The CDR issued an announcement on September 30 that significantly toughens those provisions, revoking the voting rights of members of the Executive Board of any dissolved party for five years. (Revocation of voting rights under Thai law normally results in a ban on holding political office as well.) Late today, the press announced a wave of resignations from TRT. About 100 former MPs, mostly from the Northeast-based Wang Nam Yom faction, resigned en masse. Former DPM (and candidate for UN SecGen) Surakiart Sathirathai also announced his resignation, as did former party spokesman Suranand Vejajiva. These resignations appear to be linked to the tougher penalties announced over the weekend by the CDR, although Wang Nam Yom, the biggest faction in TRT, had been rumored to be looking for an exit strategy from the party for some time.

BOYCE